NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT 2006-2007

GENERAL

Throughout the year, the Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) has been involved in a range of religious, social and cultural activities, often involving the wider community. This report contains an outline of this work.

SECTION 1.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT AND NATRIONAL BODIES

1.Working with the Department for Education and Science (DfES) and the Qualifications &Curriculum Authority (QCA)

The Qualification and Curriculum Authority

Worked with the QCA and other faith bodies on a Key Sage 3 review of non-statutory guidance on religious education .NSO participants were of the view that there should be a requirement that the schools should teach other religions including Sikhism as well as those of the Abrahamic faiths, namely Christianity, Judaism and Islam).

NSO also expressed the views of the Sikh community that teaching of Sikhism is being marginalised

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even in schools with a majority of Sikh pupils. Apart from a handful of schools where the NSO has been able to support and secure the acceptance of Sikhism as a GCSE subject in its own right with the Edexcel Examination Board, there is little provision for pupils to take any qualifications in Sikh religious studies. [See also P3]

Admission Criteria for Sikh Schools

NSO has put forward a case to the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) for changing the admission criteria for Sikh Schools. Guru Nanak Sikh Voluntary Aided Secondary School is very successful and thereby very popular with parents. Sikhs are free to attend any gurdwara and are not bound by parishes; therefore it is difficult for parents to provide evidence that they are practicing Sikhs and regularly attend a gurdwara. It is also difficult for the School to ensure that the admission criteria are fair for all pupils. At the request of NSO, the admission requirements have now been changed to allow the school to ask parents to provide a recent picture of the parents and children to indicate a degree of commitment to the Sikh Religion.

Collective Worship

NSO has also had meetings with the DfES on the issue of Collective Acts of Worship. Existing legislation requires that all the Acts of Collective Worship should be, 'wholly or mainly of broadly Christian nature'. This is not acceptable to Sikhs. In all schools, particularly non-

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denominational schools, due regard should be paid to the religious traditions of all pupils.

The wearing of Sikh symbols in schools

The NSO supports the view of the Sikh Reyat Maryada that Amrit should not be taken until a person is mature enough to understand its full significance. It is possible for a schoolchild to have such understanding and the NSO has been heavily involved in supporting the right of a secondary school amritdhari pupil to have the right to wear his kirpan to school.

Following advice from the NSO, the school allowed the student to wear the kirpan, but other teachers, parents and local newspaper and radio stations objected. NSO had a busy time responding on the radio and in the press questioning the right of the student. Relevant guidance can be found in DfES/Home Office guidance: 'Dealing with trouble makers- Annex F'. This states that LEA s and Governing Bodies, in considering the wearing of kirpans by Sikh pupils, need to be aware of the Race Relations Act 1976 section 7 under which prohibiting the wearing of a kirpan might be alleged to constitute unlawful indirect discrimination. For more information see www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9232

Karas.Two girls experienced difficulties in wearing a kara in school. The NSO supported their right, and, with guidance from the DfES and discussion with parents, helped ensure that right procedures were followed. The

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case was successfully sorted out with girls being allowed to wear the karas with no further harassment

Halal meat in schools

NSO has also requested DfES to send official guidance to all schools asking them not to serve halal meat to Sikh children. The DfES has accepted the NSO's concern that it is not possible for the community to approach each and every school and the DfES has confirmed that definitive guidance will be published in 2007.

Teaching of Sikhism

NSO with support from the British Sikh education Council has successfully negotiated a full GCSE Course with Edexcel Examination Board. NSO has worked tirelessly to promote the course so that our Sikh youngsters will be able to learn something about Sikhism through the normal school curriculum. The examination is in English and has an equivalent value to GCSE obtained in any other subject. As a result of this NSO initiative, in only 2 years more than 600 students took exams (June 2006) and passed with mostly A and A* results. NSO is grateful to those teachers and gurdwara committees who gave their support by organizing additional classes in Sikhism. For further information on how to start classes or training for the course, please phone NSO or email: sikhmessenger@aol.com

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NSO helped DfES to organise a conference in January 2006, 'Sikhism in Schools'. Sikh teachers from all over the country were invited to discuss the current position of teaching of Sikhism in religious education in schools. NSO highlighted the need to improve resources, teaching skills and ensure more time is given to the teaching of Sikhism.

NSO is represented in organizations involved in religious education such as RE Council and Shap. NSO is consistently asked to read and revise educational material such as journals, books, videos and photographs to ensure accuracy, and has received warm appreciation for this support.

Conferences

Cumberland Lodge Windsor 8-10 September 2006.'Religious Education in Multi-faith Society'. The Director's presentations on 'faith schools' and on 'Daily Acts of Collective Worship in schools', were very much appreciated. Dr Indarjit Singh presented statistics that showed that there are over 7000 church schools, nearly 200 Jewish schools about 8 Muslim schools, and only two Sikh schools (one primary and one secondary, with another primary school opening in Slough 2007.Dr Indarjit Singh emphasised that while different faiths should have a right to have their own faith schools, the religious curriculum must ensure that other religions are also fully taught and given due respect.

Dr Kanwaljit Kaur (Chair, British Sikh Education Council) and Indarjit Singh Director Network of Sikh Organisations attended a small meeting with Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Lord Adonis, Education Minister, and representatives of other faiths, on the afternoon of Monday 23 October 06. The meeting had been called to inform faith representatives of the government's intention to introduce legislation to require new faith schools to set aside 25% of places to people of other faiths.

All faiths indicated their opposition to quotas and compulsion. While other faiths have been quick to claim credit for the government's sudden about turn on this issue, the reality is that the most telling points were made by the Sikh representatives and, inadvertently, by a Muslim.

Government Ministers had indicated their concern over the possibility of indoctrination, particularly in Muslim schools. Sikhs said that the use of quotas was unhelpful social engineering, and that the blanket imposition of quotas, would be unfair on schools, like the Guru Nanak School in Hayes. The catchment area for the school comprises mostly working class families and yet the school is a national leader in educational attainment and is three times over subscribed. While those from other communities were welcome, quotas that resulted in the exclusion of Sikhs would be clearly unfair.

It was added that though the school had only two Sikh teachers, its success lay in a Sikh ethos of respect between teachers and pupils and emphasis on respect for all communities. The Ministers' attention was also drawn to the fact that the school also had excellent links with other schools and with local industry and commerce.

Following the Sikh presentation, ministers promised to consider a Sikh proposal for more rigorous inspections for all faith schools to measure their commitment to community cohesion.

The most telling point against the proposal to make faith schools offer 25% of places to people not of that faith was also made by Sikhs, that, this could lead to aggressively proselytising directed at the 25% pupils of other faiths.. Inadvertent support was given to this concern by the Muslim representatives who stated that their schools were already trying to get 25% or more non Muslims in Muslim schools but so far none have applied!

Developing Community Cohesion through Education

The following points were made by the NSO at a Faith Summit between faith groups and Rt. Hon Alan Johnson MP Secretary of State for Education held on 14 December 2006:

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NSO Presentation by Dr Kanwaljit Kaur-Singh Dr Indarjit Singh

Key Points

1. In looking to a more cohesive society it is important to consider impediments to community cohesion. In doing this we need to speak frankly, and we hope the following sentiment will be taken in this spirit. Although some faiths believe that theirs is the 'only true way', or 'the final revelation', it should be appreciated that this view is not necessarily shared by others. and attempts at proselytizing hinder community cohesion. The Sikh view is that no one faith has a monopoly of truth and the dominant ethos of a Sikh faith school is that all faiths should be respected.

2. The Assembly should relate religious teachings to current national and international concerns and remind pupils of their duties to wider society The Assembly should also be used to talk about key events or celebrations in other faiths

3. RE should include the teachings of other religions. Wherever practicable, visitors from other faiths should contribute to this teaching. The only Sikh faith school in the UK at Hayes in Middlesex is committed to teaching RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

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4. The equal treatment of males and females should be integral to all parts of the curriculum and all aspects of school life.

5. Teaching staff from other faiths should be welcomed wherever practicable.

6. Regular Ofsted inspections should include evaluation of the above.

7. A spirit of 'seva', or voluntary service within the school and in the wider community should be encouraged. In addition to seva in the wider community, the Guru Nanak Sikh Secondary VA School in Hillingdon also assists those in the young Offenders Institute at Feltham.

8. Use of the school as a community resource is highly desirable. The Guru Nanak Sikh Secondary VA School Guru Nanak School in Hayes leads in this.

9. Strong links should be fostered with neighbouring schools of other faiths. The Guru Nanak Sikh Secondary VA School has developed particularly good cooperation with a local Catholic school.

10. Strong links should also be developed with local employment and with educational institutions. The Guru Nanak Sikh Secondary VA School is leading in this area.

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FOOTNOTE

The Sikh presentation was highly appreciated by the Secretary of State and by representatives of other faiths and it was agreed that all faiths would work together to produce a Memorandum of Understanding on such lines as guidance to all faith schools.

2. The Home Office and Department for Communities & Local Government

NSO is a member of Faith Communities Consultative Council, and has also met with the Home Office on issues such as Race Hate-Crime and concerns of the Sikh Community over its apparent marginalisation in British national life.

3 The Foreign Office

The Director was asked to take part in the Foreign Office Capability Review identifying the priorities for the Foreign Office.

4. Department of International Development

NSO Director is regularly invited by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of Exchequer to discuss issues concerning the Third World development. In the recent meeting it was decided to raise funds for immunization against diseases. Below is the appeal made by the Director to the Sikh community for their support.

PRESS RELEASE AND APPEAL

PROMOTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF BRITISH SIKHS

THROUGH SEVA
NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS JOINS OTHER FAITHS
IN MASS IMMUNISATION INITIATIVE

The International Finance Facility for Immunisation has issued its first ever bonds aimed at saving millions of children in the developing world, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown announced today.

The International Finance Facility for Immunisation (IFFIm) will raise up to $4 billion dollars over the next ten years to tackle some of the deadliest diseases in the world's poorest countries. By immunising 500 million people over the next 10 years, over 10 million lives could be saved.

Recognising this combination of strong moral purpose and the power to raise finance, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Hindu Forum of Britain and the Network of Sikh Organisations today expressed their strong support for IFFIm by buying the first IFFIm bonds.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Indarjit Singh Director NSO said:

It gives me real pleasure to add the support of the Network of Sikh Organisations and Britain's half million Sikhs to this wonderful initiative for the mass immunisation

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of millions of the worlds poorest children. Sikhs will recognise it as a significant move in line with Guru Nanak's teaching of 'seva' or service to the less fortunate. I am confident that many other Sikh gurdwaras and individuals will give their enthusiastic support to this important initiative.

What particularly impresses me is the widespread support and enthusiasm shown, not only by faith groups, but also by many financial institutions and secular organisations. Such initiatives help us look beyond selfish and parochial interests to what Sikh are reminded about in our main daily prayer: our common responsibility for the wellbeing of our wider human family.

SECTION 2.

Prison Chaplaincy

Background

The Sikh Chaplaincy Service (SCS) provides pastoral care for all prison inmates professing the Sikh faith. It also provides an information and consultative link with Prison Service HQ in London, and is represented on the Chaplaincy Council.

Structure of the Service

Regional Offices.

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The SCS is supported by seven regional offices which are now co-terminus with Prison Service Areas and run by Sikh Area Chaplains operating on a voluntary basis

Operational Constraints

The work of the SCS consists, in the main, of responding to requests to provide suitable Sikh Visiting Ministers for a thinly spread Sikh prison population across the country. Throughout the year there has been a continuing effort to place the service on a more professional basis. This has now become necessary because of more onerous responsibilities resulting from a wider recognition of the concept of a multi faith Chaplaincy Service. Job descriptions for both Sessional Chaplains and Area Managers have now been circulated and it is hoped that appointment of Gagandeep Singh as full-time chaplain in London, will enable him to assist with training.

Issues Arising During 2006-7

Kirpans. While most prisons now understand and accept the wearing of kirpans by Sikh visiting ministers, there are still some establishments where the wearing is objected to on vague security grounds. Difficulties also continue to arise over the wearing of kirpans by Sikh visitors and members of staff. The SCS view is that this should be permitted, and long promised definitive guidance is still awaited.

General Concerns

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The work of the SCS is made more difficult by the need to constantly make governors, Christian chaplains and others aware of basic Sikh practices and religious requirements. Despite detailed guidance from the Prison Service, many are still unaware of or unsympathetic to Sikh religious requirements. It is hoped that these will decrease with the continuing development of a Multi-faith Chaplaincy Service.

The Media

The concept of a multi faith chaplaincy was attacked by the Bishop of Rochester, Bishop Nazir in an article in the Sunday Telegraph. The Director SCS responded to this in a 'Thought for the Day' broadcast. There will, no doubt be other attacks, but it is important that the Chaplaincy Service adheres to its present enlightened policies.

SECTION 3.

NSO Projects

Sikh Consultancy Service Project

This Project provides guidance to raise awareness among statutory and non-statutory organisations of the introduction of the 'Religion and Belief 2003 Regulations' that makes religious discrimination unlawful for the first time in the UK. Under this regulation employers have a duty to give equal opportunities to their Sikh employees and Sikh employees also have their right to equality. Detailed

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guidance on the impact of the new Regulations is provided in a publication 'Guidelines on religious discrimination and Sikh Ethos published October 2005 by the NSO With support from DTI. This has been distributed to all gurdwaras and other organisations. Copies can also be downloaded from the NSO website: www.nsouk.co.uk

Four seminars organized by the NSO on the new Regulations were held in 2006 for ACAS trainers. The seminars took place two in London, one each in Nottingham and Newcastle. Most of the participants were trainers who train their advisers in the Employment Equality Regulation. Some members of the Citizen's Advice Bureau also attended the seminars. In the seminars information was given about Sikh religion and Sikh practices. The issues facing the Sikh employees and employees were also highlighted. This was to assist both employers and employees so that all are aware of the equality issues for Sikhs. Guidance paper 'Sikh Beliefs and Practices for Non Sikhs' was written and given to ACAS to be put on their website for future reference.

Guidance for London Police

NSO wrote guidance for the City of London Police, 'Sikhs and Sikhism in Britain- A Guide for Non-Sikhs', and trained trainers on equality in Religion and Belief for Sikhs. Guidance can be found on the NSO website under 'Publications'. The City of London Police invited NSO to give training during their two day conference on 'Diversity'. NSO

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was also invited by the Metropolitan police to give them guidance on Faith Focused Hate Crime Strategy. The contributions were well received.

Guidance paper on Sikh Beliefs and Practices for Non Sikhs can be found on the NSO website. It has been well received. A CRE officer asked if it could be published so that it can be widely circulated for the benefit of those who are not comfortable with the internet.

Support for City Hall on Olympics 2011

A number of meetings were attended regarding Olympics to ensure that the authorities are aware of the needs of Sikhs and they are not harassed for wearing their 5Ks. NSO is grateful to Mrs Guacharo Kauri Ghana-aura and Councillor Permit Singh Sandhog for attending these meetings.

Sikh Women's Support group

NSO started a Support Group for Sikh women in March 2006. The information was sent to all member organizations and gurdwaras. NSO is supporting several cases of domestic difficulties, violence, depression and bereavement. NSO has a number of experienced volunteers ready to help. If you know any Sikh man or woman who needs help please ring NSO numbers 020 8540 4148, 020 8544 8037 or email sikhmessenger@aol.com

General Guidance on Employment

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NSO corrected guidance materials written about Sikhs practices by major businesses such as TESCO and Marks and Spencers. Information on the major Sikh festivals and how to support Sikh employees during these festivals is given quite regularly through telephone, emails and written requests. NSO also meets regularly with the Citizen's Advice Bureau (now called 'Advice Bureau' to ensure that the staff is trained to support Sikhs. Training was provided to seven Bureau in different geographic areas of the country.

NSO attends meeting of the Religion and Belief Group to ensure that there is a Sikh input in the new Religion and Belief strand of the Equality Legislation of 2003.

NSO also attended meetings with several other government and non-government bodies such as The London Development Agency to talk about the need of Sikhs to avoid possible harassment of those wearing Sikh symbols.

Information was provided (written and verbal) on a wide range of issues concerning Sikhs. A few are detailed below:

- Information was given to an employer in Devon who employees Sikh immigrants and would like to help his employees to get in touch with other Sikhs.

▪ Advice has been sought on the wearing of kirpans (religious short swords) by the prison service, law courts, British Airways, schools, colleges and other public institutions. Security considerations, after 9/11 and the more recent London bombings have increased the need for such advice.

▪ Requests for information from the armed services for wearing of turbans and the religious requirement of uncut hair in relation to the wearing of safety equipment have been sought.

▪ Advice was given to the Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Sutton Law Court on Sikhs taking oath.

▪ Guidance on employment of Sikhs was given to many employers For example, a company employing Sikhs required its drivers to provide hair samples in a programme of DNA testing for drug taking. A Sikh driver objected saying that it was against his religion to cut his hair. The advice helped the employer and the employee to arrive at a mutually satisfactory method of testing.

▪ Regularly advice is sought by the Health Service, local hospitals, and local authorities on Sikh practices. Many local authority Race Equality Units ask the NSO to correct their written guidance on Sikh practices, in an attempt to provide Employment Equality Legislation.

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- Advice was provided to the Department of Constitutional Affairs on issues within the work environment from a religious perspective.

- Many local authority departments, such as Newham Council's Race Equality Unit sought advice and guidance on the wearing of kirpans. Statutory bodies such as National Health Service, Lancashire and Lincolnshire diversity services, Midland police sought advice on Sikh beliefs and practices.

- Advice was given to Department of Education and Skills and the Home Office on Sikh dietary requirements to increase awareness that halal should not be served to Sikh employees and Sikh guests at conferences and cultural celebrations.

- At the request of some gurdwaras, a booklet giving information about the impact of the equality legislation on the gurdwara employers and employees is currently being written in Punjabi for the benefit of those who are not fluent in the English language. This will be sent to all member organisations and will be will be available on the website and through the post on request

SECTION 4

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Charities

NSO support was given to many charities such as the Autistic Society, Foundation for People's rights-Learning Difficulties, UK Organ Transplant Donation, National Society of Protection against Cruelty to Children. Donations were also made to the new Sikh school in Slough and to the Interfaith Network UK

SECTION 5

Media

NSO took up a case against BBC for their inaccurate reports claiming 'Sikhs want open air cremations'. Many member organizations complained. NSO put in a carefully argued detailed complaint. This led to a full and unqualified apology. A full apology was also broadcast after the 6pm and 10pm BBC Television News Bulletins. The full apology can be seen on the NSO website: www.nsouk.co.uk. A separate letter of apology by the Head of BBC News to the Director NSO is reproduced below:

British Broadcasting Corporation
4th December 2006
Dr Indarjit Singh
Director Network of Sikh Organisations

Dear Dr Singh,

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The inaccuracies in the report of the funeral pyre broadcast on BBC News on the 13th July have been belatedly brought to my attention. I wish to apologise for the reports and our handling of your complaint.

As you are aware we have taken the time to examine this report. The BBC's editorial department is responding separately to your detailed complaint. As the manager responsible for BBC TV News I wish to give my views on our mistakes The reporting team were confident that they had thoroughly checked the sources of the story; however it is now clear they did not test all sides of the issue sufficiently thoroughly. The Ten o'clock bulletin amended the six o'clock news' report and included a line explaining "this is not a practice most Sikhs want"; however this should have indicated to the correspondent that the whole tenet of the ceremony as being any more than a one-off, organised by a non-representative group was wrong. The inclusion of this sentence was not sufficient to balance the report and it is unfortunate that the points you made that evening did not play a greater part in the reworking of the piece. Because of these errors we will broadcast on air apologies for the pieces.

I am sorry you have experienced some discourtesy in your dealing with my staff. I am writing to them to ensure that they follow best practice when taking

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calls from members of the community who are offering expertise or knowledge.

I have held a meeting with senior editors to decide the way forward. The UK News Editor is to discuss the issues which arise from this incident with the members of staff closely involved with it. I hope you find these measures satisfactory.

Yours sincerely

Peter Horrocks

Head of TV News, BBC

Best wishes

Media Training

BBC News staff were given a half day's training session on the Sikh faith by the Director NSO at Guru Singh Sabha Hounslow. They asked for this training to be repeated for more staff.

Officers from the Home Office' Faith unit were given training on Sikhism and were taken to visit a gurdwara. NSO delivered INSET for 22 BBC reporters on Sikhism and took them to visit a gurdwara for first hand experience.

Broadcasting

The Director contributes regularly to 'Thought for the Day' on the prestigious Radio 4 'Today' Programme, highlighting the teachings of Sikhism on current social and political concerns. It was to some extent an appreciation of these teachings that led to Indarjit's inclusion in the

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Independent 'Good List' of 50 Men and Women who make Our World a Better Place'. His contributions to 'Pause for Thought' on Radio 2, with Terry Wogan. have led to him being complimented by HM The Queen.

The Director also participated in several other radio and TV programmes, including a much appreciated programme on 'Gardens of Faith'

SECTION 6

SIKH COMMEMORATIONS

400th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan

NSO commemorated the 400th anniversary of the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan on the 19th June in the traditional Sikh way of remembering the thirst and suffering of the martyred Guru in the searing heat of an Indian June, by looking to the thirst of others, by setting up 'Shabeel' stalls to give the general public, cool refreshing drinks. Trafalgar Square was chosen as the venue for the 400th anniversary commemorations in which 7000 cans of coke, 1000 bottles of water and 1000 cartons of juice were given to astonished summer tourists. NSO wish to thank hundreds of volunteers who gave drinks to passers-by with literature explaining the commemoration and Sikh beliefs. Copies of the literature distributed along with a souvenir issue of the Sikh Messenger, can be found on the NSO website under 'Publications'. The Press Release is reproduced over:

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SHABEEL IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Network of Sikh Organisations commemorates the 400th Anniversary of Guru Arjan's martyrdom

A Unique Event in the History of Religious Tolerance

.On Monday 19th June the Bishops of London and Southwark joined Sikhs in London's Trafalgar Square to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev. The Minister for the new Department of Communities and Local Government Phil Woolas MP, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Tom Butler and the Rt. Rev. Richard Chartres helped Sikh volunteers distribute free cooling drinks to passers by in memory of the death and suffering of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru who was tortured to death in the searing heat of an Indian summer.

Forced to sit on a hot plate while hot sand was poured over his near naked body, Guru Arjan's only crime was to be one of the first interfaith pioneers, teaching that no one religion had the monopoly on Truth and that all faiths should be respected.

Dr Indarjit Singh, Editor of the Sikh Messenger and Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations who planned the event said: –

"Handing out cool, refreshing drinks to passers-by is an act of kindness that remembers Guru Arjan's thirst and suffering while looking to the needs of others,

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irrespective of their race, colour or creed. "His respect for all faiths has particular relevance for today's times when the murder of innocents in the name of religion has sadly become all too common. We are delighted and honoured that the Anglican and Catholic Bishops of Southwark and the Bishop of London and other religious leaders are able to join us on the anniversary of his martyrdom. Together we can focus on the values of respect, tolerance and understanding and remember the courage of all those who have given their lives in the service of humanity."

Also attending the event were the Minister for Communites and Local Government Phil Woolas MP; Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain; Anil Bhanot, General Secretary, Hindu Council UK, Rabbi Alan Plancey of the Cabinet of the Chief Rabbi, The Very Revd William Noblett Chaplain General of the Prison Service and Brian Pearce Director of the Interfaith Network UK.

Students and teachers from Guru Nanak School Hayes and Guru Gobind Singh College Chigwell and Sikh scouts helped distribute water, juice and soft drinks among the many thousands of visitors and tourists many of whom were clearly moved by the kindness and generosity of the Sikhs. Some 15,000 leaflets were handed out explaining the circumstances of the martyrdom and an outline of Sikh belief. Members of a Polish TV crew who were filming on

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the Square said that they were so moved by what they saw that they felt like converting to Sikhism.

SECTION 7

HERITAGE & THE ARTS

Sikh Arts'- Annual Kapany Lecture at Victoria and Albert museum

Continued support was given to the Annual Kapany Lecture on Sikh Art in the Victoria and Albert Museum. NSO provided the organizers with lists of names of prominent Sikhs interested in Sikh arts who might wish to attend. The NSO also continued to work closely with S Harbinder Singh and the 'Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail'.

Exhibition in the National Portrait Gallery- Faith and Church

NSO Director Indarjit Singh's portrait was exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery from March-May 2007. Don Mucllum, the famous photographer was commissioned by the Gallery to take photos of different faith leaders. The Director invited three Gianis from Singh Sabha Hounslow to stand alongside him for the portrait; a gesture that was commended by many visitors to the Gallery. The Gallery advertised this exhibition by putting a full page copy of this portrait in the London Evening Standard.

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SECTION 8

PUBLICATIONS

▪ A special issue of the Quarterly Sikh Messenger was published to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Guru Arjan's Martyrdom.

▪ Insight to Sikhism- an article available on the website.

▪ Guidance on Sikhism for non-Sikhs given to ACAS, Citizens Advice and Police. It is available on NSO's website.

▪ Basic Teaching series 1-3. Pamphlets giving information on Sikhs and their practices written and printed for distribution. These are also available on NSO's website.

▪ Guidance on Evolution, Given to the 'Welcome Trust', Summaries Sikh view on evolution.

SECTION 9

INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

Lectures and Talks

▪ The NSO Director and other volunteer staff have responded to many requests for talks and lectures and participation in National events... These include:

- Talk by NSO Director Dr Indarjit Singh to churches in South Croydon (April)

- Breakfast Meeting at 11 Downing Street to discus faith attitudes to forthcoming G8 summit in St Petersburg (May)

- Buckingham Palace Meeting to mark the 50th anniversary of the Commonwealth Studies Conference (May)

- Meeting to draw up Multi- Faith Response to Major Emergencies in London (May)

- Function organized by Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities (June)

- Service in St Paul's Cathedral to mark 80th birthday of HM The Queen (June)

- Mansion House Lunch in celebration of 80th birthday of HM The Queen (June)

- Interfaith lecture at the Hitchin summer festival (July)

- Address to inter faith gathering at Westminster Abbey (July)

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- Director attended 'Army of Today' presentation at Roehampton (July)

- Annual Stafford SACRE lecture (Sept)

- Meeting to show Sikh support for Jewish Laniado Hospital Project to alleviate suffering of Jews and Palestinians (Oct)

- Development of a Faith Alliance Strategy for resettlement of Offenders in Prison Establishments (Nov)

- Metropolitan Police Authority Counter Terrorism Debate (Nov)

- Presenting Sikhism at a Rabbis' Conference. S Gurmukh Singh, columnist with the Sikh Times gave an impressive talk on behalf of the NSO (Nov)

- Talk to Esher Quakers (Nov)

- Talk to Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter (Nov)

- CRE Catalyst for Change lecture (Dec)

- Lecture to Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust (Dec)

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- Accounting for Sustainability Conference organized by the Prince of Wales at St James' Palace (Dec)

- Talk to the Relationships Foundation (Feb 07)

- 10th Anniversary Lecture Brighton & Hove Interfaith Group (Feb 07)

- Contributed to Commonwealth Day at Westminster Abbey (Mar)

The NSO continued to support the Inter-faith Network UK through funding support and attending meetings and conferences.

Women's Interfaith network

NSO is a founder member of Women's Inter-faith Group and started the first sub-group in Chigwell. Over 40 women of different faiths: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindu, Bahais, Buddhist and most for the first time ever visited the gurdwara in Hounslow. Dr Kanwaljit Kaur- Singh organized the visit, gave a short talk to explain Sikh principles and practices. Everyone appreciated both the talk and the hospitality offered to them by NSO and the Singh Sabha Gurdwara Hounslow.

Standing Advisory Council Religious Education (SACRE)

NSO has been helping the RE Council by supporting and introducing Sikh representatives for SACREs. At the

www.archive.org/details/namdhari

request of NSO, Sikhs have offered their services to become SACRE members in, Southwark, Hammersmith and Fulham, Buckinghamshire, Walthamstow and Reading. NSO thanks all the new Sikh SACRE members. NSO expresses grateful thanks to MrsGurcharan Kaur Ghata-aura for attending and representing NSO on SACRE Meetings.

SECTION 10
MEDIATION IN GURDWARA DISPUTES

Khalsa Centre, Tooting, London

When differences arose within the Khalsa Centre (Gurdwara in Tooting) Management Committee, both the parties approached the NSO Director to arbitrate. After many meetings, compromise was sought and the Director was given full powers to hold the elections. The election for the Management Committee took place peacefully and efficiently. NSO paid for the expenses of the election. NSO is thankful to friends who volunteered their time to help in checking to ensure that voters were genuine members and counting a large number of votes. This was a tremendous success as the dispute was resolved without acrimony, adverse publicity or additional cost to the Sangat.

Central Gurdwara, Shepherds Bush London.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji eLibrary NamdhariElibrary@gmail.com

The Director NSO also helped in discussions to ensure that the existing historic gurdwara would be retained and provision for Sikhs enhanced with the opening of additional gurdwara premises in Ealing, West London.

SECTION 11

REPRESENTATION ON NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS

- The NSO expresses grateful thanks to Councillor Paramjit Singh Sandhu for attending various meetings on behalf of the Director such as .GLA Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony (Jan 07) and the National Merchant Seamen Interfaith Memorial Service at London Bridge.

- NSO Director represented the Sikh Community in several national commemorations such as on the Remembrance Day at the Cenotaph, and Commonwealth Observance Day at Westminster Abbey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The NSO is grateful to the Sikh Chaplaincy Team, and volunteers in other areas, who have selflessly given their time and energy in assisting the NSO throughout the year.